

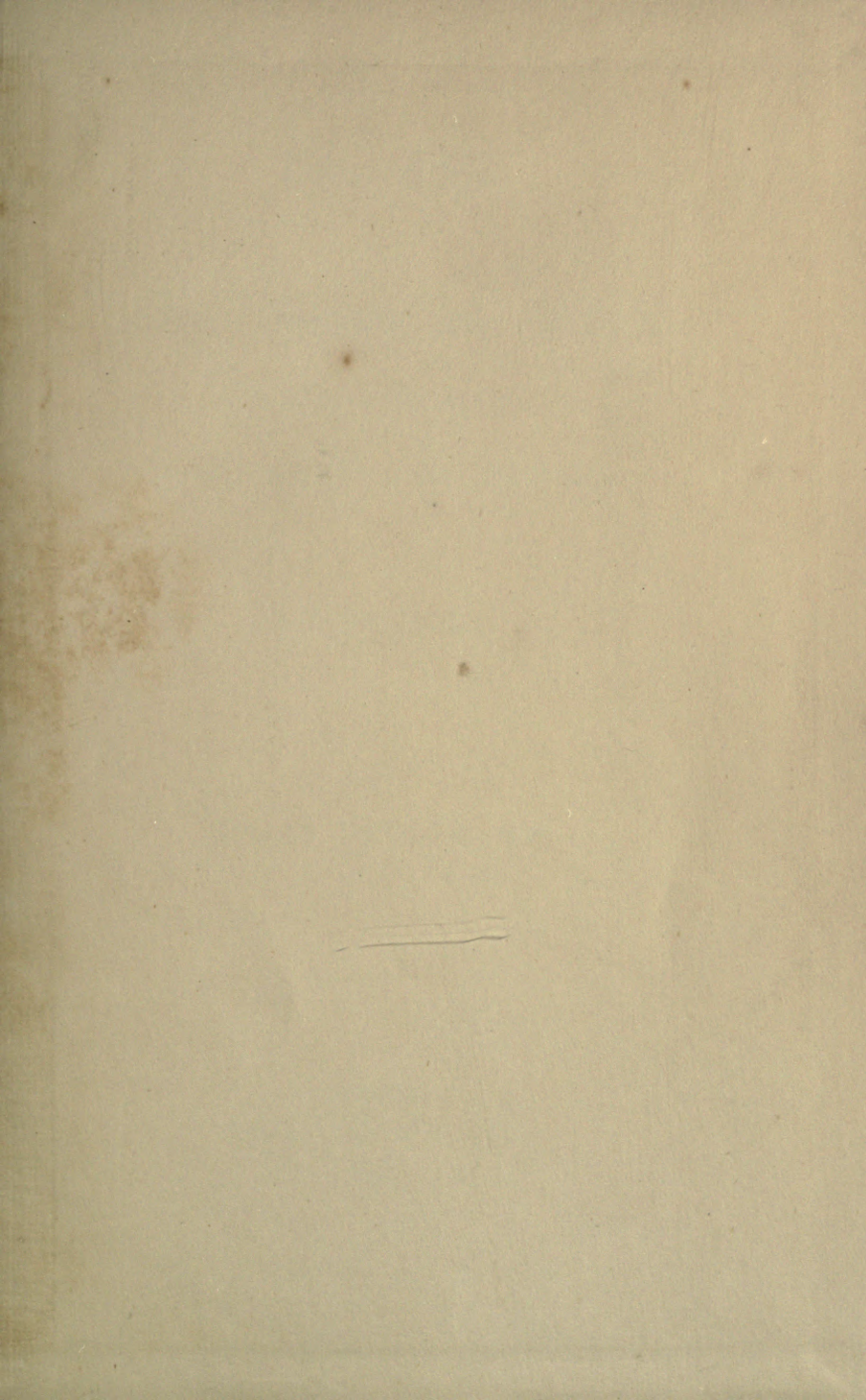
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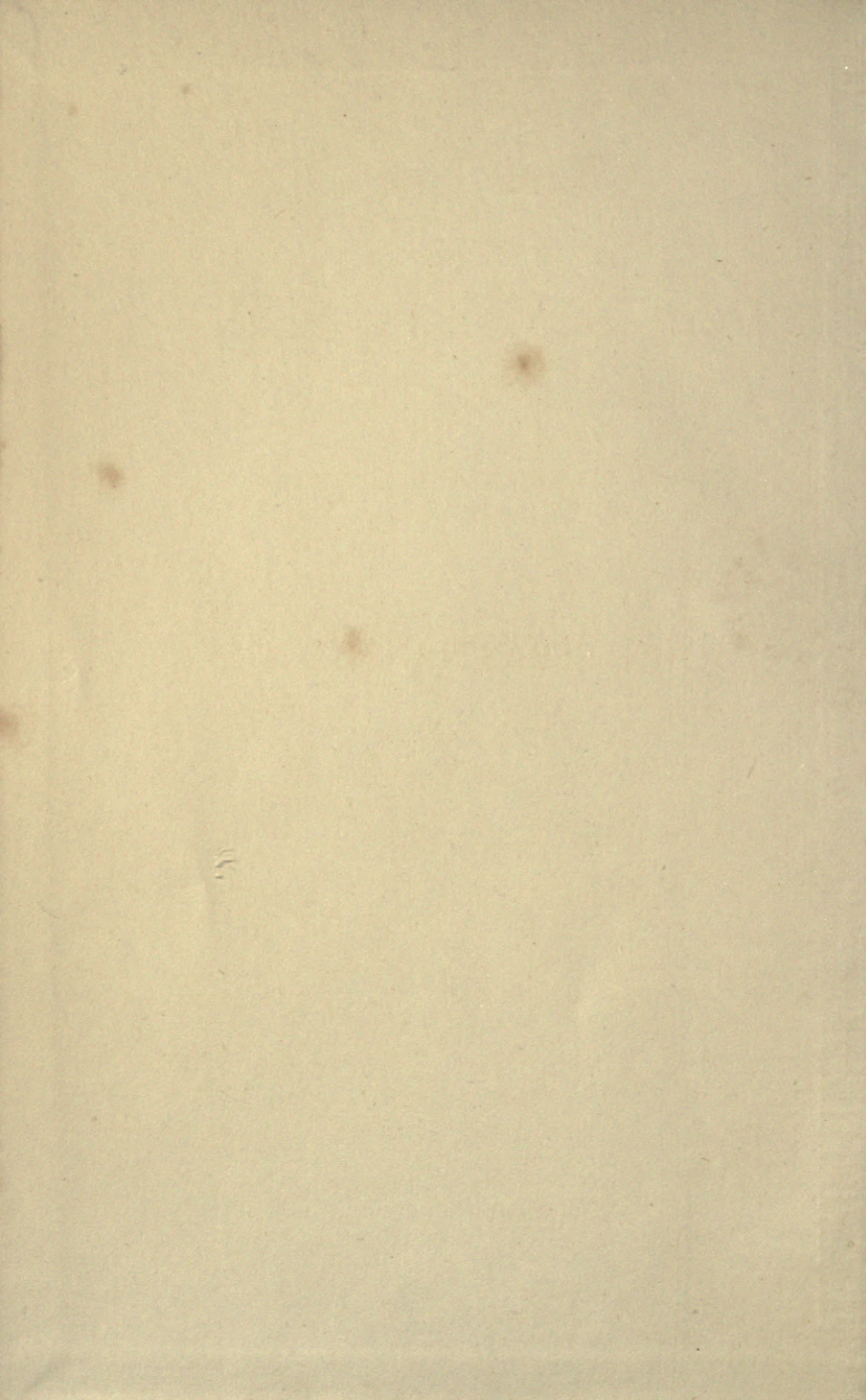


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John Sebastian Bach

Sedley Taylor





The Life
OF
John Sebastian Bach

IN RELATION TO HIS WORK AS A
CHURCH MUSICIAN AND COMPOSER

A LECTURE

BY

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Cambridge
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1897

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PREFACE.

The following lecture was delivered as an introduction to performances of selected extracts from some of J. S. Bach's church cantatas, which took place in Cambridge on November 4th and 11th 1893. The object for which those performances were organized was to draw increased attention to a series of compositions, rarely to be heard, but containing elements of beauty which, I think, hardly appear with equal intensity even in the St. Matthew Passionmusic or the B minor Mass. The extracts from seventeen of these compositions then presented would, I thought, command an added interest from hearers who already knew how closely Bach's life was centred on the composition of church music, and how directly his lineage, education and development led up to it. I accordingly prepared an introductory lecture by compiling from Spitta's elaborate biography* a condensed account of Bach's life *in relation to his*

* Johann Sebastian Bach von Philipp Spitta. Leipzig : Breitkopf und Härtel, 1880.

work as a church musician and composer. This I now publish, almost unaltered, with the idea that there may be readers willing to learn from my 52 pages what they will not seek in Spitta's 1800; but much more in the hope that it may be the means of inducing some admirers of Bach who have as yet not made acquaintance with the church cantatas to dig into that still almost untouched mine of musical wealth. An appendix in which I have indicated where some of what appear to me to be the choicest lodes are to be found will, I trust, do something to facilitate the search.

SEDLEY TAYLOR.

TRINITY COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE,

April, 1897.

John Sebastian Bach.

The existence of the Bach family, or clan as it may fairly be called, is traceable in its Thuringian home to a period anterior to the Reformation. The branch of it from which John Sebastian was to issue appears for the first time at Weohmar, a village near Gotha, in the person of Hans Bach who, in 1561, was a churchwarden there. The earliest member of this branch who is known to have been a musician was Veit Bach, the great-great-grandfather of our composer, whose regular business appears to have combined the avocations of a baker and of a miller. John Sebastian has left the following brief account of his ancestor's musical doings: "He had his main pleasure in a *Cytringen*"—a small instrument of the guitar family—"which he also took with him into the mill, and played upon while grinding was going on. The combined effect must have been pretty! Anyhow he must have had the *time* well drummed into him." John Sebastian's great-grandfather, Hans Bach, born probably about 1580, showed

as a boy taste for music, and was accordingly apprenticed to the *Stadtpfeifer*, or principal town musician, at Gotha who was also a "Bach." After his apprenticeship was out, Hans returned to his native village as a skilled violin player, married the daughter of the local innkeeper and earned his livelihood partly by music and partly by carpet-weaving. The more divine of these two arts was, however, evidently his real profession, as the description "*Spielmann*"—player—attached to his name in the parish register sufficiently shows. He was frequently summoned to the neighbouring towns, Gotha, Arnstadt, Erfurt, Eisenach, to assist the local musicians, and must have attained no small general popularity, as appears by his portrait having been twice taken. A couplet attached to one of these pictures in which he was represented playing on the violin testifies to his having had an humorous vein in his character which came out perceptibly in his music. He died of the plague in 1626.

Up to the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War the condition of Thuringian peasants was a fairly prosperous one, but, as Spitta writes, "The death of Hans Bach in 1626 brings us to the commencement of the time during which Thuringia had to suffer and bleed under the fearful war-scurge. From the year 1623, in which it was for

the first time traversed by troops, these wild war-hordes let loose every conceivable abomination upon this fair stretch of German earth. The villages were pillaged and burned, the meadows were devastated, the men killed, the women outraged and even the churches were not spared. To these horrors were added the terrible plague epidemics of the years 1626 and 1635. Whoever saved his life out of all the misery fled if possible for protection into the towns, hid himself in the woods, or, when no other resource remained, enlisted in the army. Thus, too, the Wechmar Bachs were scattered, and those who remained in the village gradually died out. Hans Bach's three musical sons all quitted Wechmar; they grew up in a time of blood and terror which was able to plunge the best disposed into savagery and to lame the strongest wills." The eldest of the three, Johann Bach, was also the musically ablest. He became town musician and organist at Erfurt, where his large family established themselves in such exclusive possession of the posts of town-musician that as late as the second half of the eighteenth century the Erfurt town musicians were actually called "the Bachs," although there was then not one man of that name holding office in their body. A younger brother, Christoph Bach, John Sebastian's grandfather, held a court appointment at Weimar,

and was afterwards a town musician at Erfurt, where he died in 1661. Hardly anything seems to be certainly known about him.

Johann Ambrosius Bach, the father of our composer, was born in 1645, and received in 1667 an appointment as Tenor-player in the town orchestra at Erfurt. A year later he married Elizabeth Lämmerhirt, daughter of a sacristan there. In 1671 he quitted Erfurt for Eisenach, taking with him a poor half-witted sister, whose death, eight years later, incidentally led to the preservation of the only notice of John Sebastian's father's musical and general capacity which has come down to us. The preacher of the sermon at her funeral spoke of Johann Ambrosius and his brothers as "men endowed with good understanding and artistic knowledge and skill, who in the service of the church and schools, and in ordinary town business, do their full share, and show their capacity by the thoroughgoing excellence of the work that they do."

John Sebastian Bach was the youngest of a family of six children. He was born at Eisenach in March 1685. It would be difficult—perhaps impossible—to name a second man of genius who could point to such roots extending to the fourth generation as even the above hasty sketch has indicated. But to anyone who, under Spitta's

guidance, plunges into genealogical study of the Bach family at large, instead of limiting himself, as I have almost exclusively done here, to the direct line from which John Sebastian sprang, will find one of the most interesting facts of musical history in this class of ecclesiastical and secular musicians, spread for generations over the towns and villages of Thuringia, which, after producing composers of distinction before John Sebastian's time, "*fortes ante Agamemnona*," gave us in him a genius of the highest rank, and then, as though its mission were accomplished, quietly passed out of public notice and was reabsorbed in the mass of the population. Of John Sebastian's earliest musical development next to nothing is known. His father, as a violin player, would presumably have made a beginning with him on that instrument. Eisenach was a musical town, and it was the habit there, already in the fifteenth century, for the poorer school children to parade the streets three times a week singing religious songs and begging for alms. In 1600 the head-master of the Eisenach school organized a regular choir for this purpose which consisted, in 1700, of more than forty voices. As little Bach afterwards distinguished himself by his beautiful soprano voice, it is to be presumed that he also may, as Luther had done two hundred years earlier, have marched singing with his school-

fellows through the streets of Eisenach. He had not, however, much time in which to do this, for before he was ten years old his father and mother were both dead, and, the home at Eisenach being broken up, he was handed over to the charge of an elder brother, Johann Christoph, established since 1690 as organist at the little town of Ohrdruf, who had been for three years a pupil of one of the most celebrated organists of the time, Pachelbel of Erfurt. Beyond this fact, which may warrant the inference that young Sebastian received from him sound instruction in organ-playing, nothing is known as to Johann Christoph's musical capacity. He must have been an active teacher, as all his sons became organists and choir-masters in or about Ohrdruf. That he sought to keep himself abreast of the progress made in his art also appears probable from the fact that he possessed—not an easy matter for a poor man in those days—a collection of works by the then most celebrated organ composers. This collection the aspiring young Sebastian was keen to set to work upon, but his brother withheld it from him. The daily sight of this forbidden fruit between the bars of a locked book-case was too much for the boy. He stealthily made his way to the book-case at night-time, dexterously used his small hands in edging the music-book through an opening in the case and

began copying it by the light of the moon. By continuing these tactics with the superlative capacity for taking trouble which has rightly been called one of the elements of genius, the boy is said to have in six months' time made a copy of the entire volume. The story ends with the assertion that his elder brother, having caught Sebastian with his surreptitiously acquired copy, was hard-hearted enough to deprive him of it. Difficult to believe as this is, the account comes to us from a writer who was in direct contact with sons of John Sebastian and so has considerable claim to credibility.

There was at Ohrdruf an unusually good school, the 'Lyceum,' from the highest class of which pupils might pass direct to the University. It was an exclusively classical school, and young Bach during his not very long time there would have been put through some Cornelius Nepos and some of Cicero's letters, portions of the New Testament in Greek, a good deal of Latin and Greek grammar and a little arithmetic. Without making him in any sense a classical scholar, this education gave him a distinct literary tinge which was of palpable advantage to him throughout his career. The teaching of music had allotted to it from four to five hours a week, and the school possessed, like that at Eisenach, a regular choir

formed from its pupils which executed sacred music in church and motets at weddings and funerals, and, at particular seasons, also sang for alms from door to door. That Sebastian must have been a leading boy in the school choir is shown by the step in his education which has next to be described.

At the completion of his fifteenth year circumstances became unfavourable to his remaining longer at Ohrdruf. His brother's increasing family made his room more welcome than his company. Perhaps, too, the boy felt that musically his brother had nothing more to teach him. In any case he applied to the school choir-master for advice as to the next step, and through him obtained membership of the Michaelisschule at Lüneburg. At Easter 1700, in company with another boy who was to join the same school, Sebastian started—doubtless on foot—for Lüneburg, and henceforth depended wholly on his own exertions.

On reaching Lüneburg Bach and his companion were at once received among the *Mettenschüler* who formed the musical Foundation of the Michaelisschule. Evidently it was not mainly Sebastian's beautiful soprano voice which can have led to his acceptance at an age when he must inevitably soon lose it, as indeed shortly after taking up his abode at Lüneburg he actually did. There was, however, plenty of employment for him in accompanying

the choir on the cembalo or organ at rehearsals, playing the violin in concerted church music, and so on. It must have been mainly the reputation as an instrumentalist which he had established at Ohrdruf that enabled the choir-master at the Lyceum there to obtain his admission among the Lüneburg Mettenschüler. It says much for the musical activity of that town to find that a second school, the Johannisschule, existed there which maintained a choir of the same kind as that of the Michaelis-schule. A rivalry, easy enough to understand, stimulated the exertions of the two choirs, and occasionally when they happened to meet during their musical perambulations led to conflicts with less spiritual weapons than those of song. We shall have occasion to observe that Bach when engaged, in middle life, in an administrative and controversial struggle, maintained his cause with extreme vigour and inflexible resolution. Whether he ever exhibited physical manifestations of these qualities in the streets of Lüneburg is unfortunately not known.

The activity of the Michaelis choir was very considerable. On eighteen festivals in each year there was regularly music in the church with full orchestral accompaniment, which also was pretty often specially ordered on other occasions. Some thirty complete vocal and instrumental

performances would thus be given in each year. On ordinary Sundays a motet would always be sung at the morning service, and in the afternoon there would be an aria accompanied by the organ. It must have been a pleasure to Sebastian to ascertain in the choir library that the musical fame of two members of his family had preceded him to Lüneburg. It contained a work by Heinrich Bach, and another by Johann Christoph Bach. The name of Pachelbel, the teacher of Sebastian's Ohrdruf brother, also appeared in its catalogue.

Bach remained three years at Lüneburg. During this time he doubtless passed through the highest class of the Michaelisschule in which, as at the Ohrdruf Lyceum, the instruction given was almost exclusively in Latin and Greek. Presumably, however, he paid no more attention to these subjects than the routine of the school rendered obligatory, and threw his main energies upon music. Nothing is known as to the efficiency of the organist, or of the choir-master, at the Michaelisschule, but the organist of the Johannisschule, Böhm, was a man of unquestionable eminence, ranking with the best organ composers of his day. He appears to have been on friendly terms with the members of the rival choir, and is thought by Spitta to have allowed Bach the run of the Johanniskirche organ, and not to have been without some influence on the early

development of his style of organ composition. A much more celebrated player than Böhm, Adam Reinken of Hamburg, was to be heard at the cost of but a short journey from Lüneburg: it is probable that several such journeys were made by Bach in his holidays, of course always on foot and with the simplest fare, to which from a child he had been accustomed.

On quitting school at eighteen he accepted a post in the private orchestra of Wilhelm Ernst, brother of the reigning Duke of Weimar, but within a few months' time threw it up in order to take the position of organist to the Neue Kirche at Arnstadt, one of the main seats of the Bach clan. He received the appointment in the summer of 1703 and retained it for four years. During this period he probably composed a series of choral works with orchestral accompaniments similar to those in the performance of which he had so often taken part at Lüneburg.

After a couple of years' work in Arnstadt Bach, we may well believe, felt the need of throwing himself for a time into a more bracing musical atmosphere, and rubbing shoulders, or rather minds, with the masters of his craft. Leave of absence for four weeks was granted by the consistory, a deputy appointed, and, towards the end of October 1705, Bach set off from Arnstadt to make, entirely on

foot, the journey of some 250 miles to Lübeck, in order to hear, and become personally acquainted with, perhaps the most celebrated organist of his time, Dietrich Buxtehude. The journey was timed so as to enable Bach to be present at one or more of the *Abendmusiken*, afternoon concerts of sacred music with full chorus and orchestra, which Buxtehude held yearly in the Marienkirche where he was organist, on five Sundays between Martinmas and Christmas. These concerts began as early as 1673, and had gradually acquired a great celebrity. Two years before Bach's visit his great contemporary Handel had come to Lübeck, partly in order to hear Buxtehude, and partly with the idea of securing the succession to the eminent organist who was already well advanced in years. The post was among the most distinguished and best paid in Germany, but Buxtehude, who had himself married the daughter of his predecessor in office, had induced the consistory of the church to attach to the appointment the condition that the successful candidate should marry his eldest daughter. The circumstance that Handel was then eighteen years old and Fräulein Anna Margaretha Buxtehude thirty-four may well have driven all ideas of a candidature out of his head. The post was ultimately taken, and Fräulein Buxtehude duly married, by an organist named Schieferdecker.

Of Bach's intercourse with Buxtehude and of the details of his life at Lübeck we are told nothing. Evidently, however, the sojourn must have been singularly attractive to him, for he stayed on and on, oblivious of, or indifferent to, the expiration of his leave of absence, and finally reappeared at Arnstadt in February 1706 after sixteen weeks of absence instead of the covenanted four. This breach of engagement was too much for the consistory, who promptly summoned Bach before them to give an account of himself. The minutes of the sitting have fortunately been preserved. I translate literally from them as follows:

“The organist at the New Church, Bach, is called on to explain where he has lately been for so long, and of whom he received leave for such absence.

He.

“He had been to Lübeck in order to obtain an insight into this-and-that in his art, but had previously obtained permission from the Herr Superintendent (Principal clergyman).

Dominus Superintendens.

“He had asked for leave for 4 weeks, but had remained away fully 4 times as long.

He.

“He hoped the organ-playing had meantime been performed by the person whom he had provided in such a manner that no complaint could be made of it.

We

“Lay to his account that he has hitherto in playing the *Choral* (psalm or hymn tune) made many strange variations, and introduced many extraneous notes, so that the congregation were confounded thereat. He was, in future, when he wanted to bring in a chromatic note, to hold it, and not go on too quickly to another, and that, as he had been in the habit of doing, even a note foreign to the harmony.”

The consistory went on to charge Bach with having neglected to practice with the choir-boys, and assigned him a week in which to make up his mind whether he would do this work, or preferred that they should appoint a second musician to do it. They then questioned the *Chorprefect*, or head choir-boy about “the disorderly scenes which had occurred in the Neue Kirche between the boys and the organist.” He replied that “the organist Bach had been in the habit of playing too long interludes, but, when this had been pointed out to him by the Herr Superintendent, had immediately fallen into the opposite extreme and

played too short ones." The consistory thereupon brought to the lad's recollection that on the preceding Sunday he had himself gone out to a wine-shop during the sermon, to which he had nothing better to reply than that he was sorry, that it should not occur again, and that he was already in disgrace with the clergy of the church on account of his conduct. The consistory bade him behave himself better in future, and not set himself up as being in the right; and they sent word to the master of his school to shut him up in the *Carcer* (school-prison) for two hours on four consecutive days. The action of the consistory towards Bach appears to have been both reasonable and considerate. They naturally disliked having their church psalmody treated as a vehicle for constant harmonic experimentation, and they intended that the choir should be practised and kept in proper order. But, while telling Bach this quite explicitly, they showed by their willingness to appoint a choir-trainer, to relieve him of irksome work, that they were conscious of his special merits. Bach's further conduct in the matter was not altogether creditable to him. Instead of replying within a week's time to the consistory's question he let month after month pass by without making any answer at all. After waiting for eight months the consistory again summoned him and, pointing

to his neglect to answer their question whether he would, or would not, practice with the boys, remarked that as long as he was not too proud to take the church's pay he ought not to be too proud to do its work. Bach, apparently without offering a word of apology for his neglect to comply with the consistory's previous order, merely replied that he would send a written answer. How the matter ended no further minutes of consistory meetings remain to show. Presumably, however, Bach found his personal relations unpleasantly affected, as, not long afterwards, he quitted Arnstadt for Mühlhausen where, in June 1707, he was appointed organist of the church of St. Blasius.

In October of the same year he married his cousin, Maria Barbara, daughter of Johann Michael Bach who had been organist at Gehren. The bridegroom was 22 years old, the bride 20. Of her personality nothing is known. The wedding took place at Dornheim*, a small village a mile or

* In the spring of 1896 I paid, in company with Mr. H. P. Allen, organist of St. Asaph's Cathedral, a visit to Dornheim. The Herr Pastor received us very kindly, and after a short hunt, in which knowledge derived from Spitta's book enabled me to be of some assistance, he came upon the register in the church books of Bach's marriage, which he told us he had lost his memorandum of, and had repeatedly sought for in vain. The certificate is printed in full by Spitta.

two from Arnstadt,* where a connection of the bride was Pastor.

During the single year for which Bach held his new post he was brought into contact with certain theological antagonisms, his own attitude towards which is of interest in reference to his church compositions. The principal Pastor at the church of St. Blasius, J. A. Frohne, was a strong adherent of the so-called 'pietistic' school within the Lutheran church. At the head of the Marienkirche stood G. C. Eilmar, a fiery and aggressive champion of the old-fashioned, stiff, dogmatic and a trifle overbearing, Lutheran orthodoxy. These two divines were engaged in a chronic controversy, conducted both in the pulpit and by the aid of the printing-press. Frohne seems to have been what we should now call a rather rigid evangelical, Eilmar an inflexible specimen of the old 'high and dry' school, and withal somewhat of a bully. Frohne conducted his campaign with courtesy and moderation: Eilmar with arrogance and coarse vituperation. The conflict reached its crisis while Bach was at Mühlhausen. It set the other local clergymen by the ears, and caused so much ill feeling in the town that the civil authority finally intervened to check the

* At Arnstadt we saw, preserved in the Neue Kirche, the manual and pedal key-boards of the old organ on which Bach, when he was organist there, played.

mischievous activity of the contending theologians. The vein of melancholy and austere thought which led Bach to abound in the musical presentation of sorrow and suffering, and to portray with rapture the prospect of approaching death might lead one to think that in the religious controversy which raged around him at Mühlhausen his sympathies would have been with the champion of the 'pietistic' side. Spitta, however, considers an opposite conclusion to be deducible from the fact that, at the christening of Bach's first child, the champion of the orthodox party was one of the godfathers. Independently, too, of this indication, there were tendencies in the 'pietistic' system which could but repel a great church musician. It regarded all the higher developments of church music as 'of the world,' and sought to restrict it to psalmody of the simplest kind. An heir of two centuries of musical progress was not likely to adopt a creed which pointed to such an issue. To this consideration may be added that all the prepossessions of our composer's early life made in favour of a stalwart Lutheran dogmatism. His family had for generations worked in the service of the church as organists and choir-masters. He had been educated at Ohrdruf, and again at Lüneburg, in rigidly orthodox schools, where every teacher had, as a condition of appointment, to sign the formulas of Lutheranism. He thus grew up

furnished with a strongly dogmatic religion, indications of which show themselves in some of his church compositions with a degree of orthodox asperity such as to suggest that he may have by no means disapproved the action of the overbearing Eilmar.

Bach's year at Mühlhausen was musically distinguished by an event unique in his life, the publication of one of his choral works, the cantata "*Gott ist mein König*," specially composed to celebrate the election of a new municipal council, which, as Mühlhausen was then a free Imperial town (*freie Reichstadt*), was an occasion of much local importance. We may conjecture that it was on the gratitude of the newly elected councillors for the compliment thus paid them, rather than on their specially high appreciation of the musical merits of this particular cantata, that Bach was able to draw when getting together the sum requisite for its publication.

In the summer of 1708 Bach was appointed court organist and chamber musician to the Grand Duke of Weimar. The nine years which he spent there constitute the period of his most brilliant activity as organ player and organ composer. The instrument which the court chapel contained was by no means large, having only two rows of keys and, in all, 24 stops. The pedal organ, however,

was relatively unusually strong, with seven stops, including one of thirty-two, and three of sixteen, feet. Throughout the life of this prince of organists it was his fate never once to have anything like a first-rate instrument at his permanent disposal. The choir did not exceed in numbers what we are accustomed to in the largest college chapels here ; the orchestra contained twenty-two performers. Bach was now placed in singularly favourable circumstances for the cultivation of his art and the development of his genius. The Grand Duke's genuine and intelligent appreciation of church music in its highest forms encouraged and stimulated him in the composition of cantatas and of works for the organ alone. In beauty some of the cantatas written during this period were unsurpassed by any of his later works, while the Weimar organ compositions, and his own performance of them, stamped him as the greatest organ writer and organ player who had ever lived. The duty of regularly composing secular music for the Grand Duke's orchestra gave Bach the impulse which was all that was needed to set him developing his powers of orchestral composition. Artistic tours undertaken from time to time enabled him to exhibit before enthusiastic audiences his unrivalled powers on the organ, and on the pianoforte of which he was also the greatest master of his time.

One of these tours brought him into personal rivalry with an able and distinguished, but extremely vain and arrogant, Parisian organist and pianist, Louis Marchand. In the autumn of 1717 Bach and Marchand were both staying at Dresden. The French artist had played before the Court with such success as to receive from the King of Saxony a very valuable present. Bach had not played before the King, whose taste was for French music, but had created so much enthusiasm in other circles that a lively controversy arose as to which of the two was the greater artist. The German party, confident in the superiority of Bach, urged him to bring the question to an issue by challenging Marchand to a public contest. Bach, after having taken an opportunity of quietly hearing what the Frenchman could do, sent him a written challenge in which he offered to attempt whatever musical problem Marchand chose to set him, on the understanding that Marchand entered into a like engagement on his side. The challenge was accepted, musical referees were appointed, and at the assigned time a brilliant and excited audience of persons of both sexes assembled in the salon of one of the great officers of State, probably the Prime Minister, Count Flemming, whose zeal in the cause of music is known to have been exceptionally great. Bach and the musical referees made their

appearance punctually, but not so the French champion. After waiting awhile the Count sent a messenger to Marchand's quarters, where it was ascertained that he had quitted Dresden that morning "by the fast coach." He had doubtless become aware of Bach's overwhelming superiority and, rather than acknowledge it, had decided to escape defeat by flight. Bach, left in possession of the field, played by himself, with what triumphant success may be easily imagined. It is pleasant to find that, as his character would have led one to expect, Bach, so far from afterwards seeking to make capital out of Marchand's humiliation, never referred to it of his own accord, and disliked having the matter mentioned in his presence.

In 1717 Bach entered on a new stage, the last but one of his career, by taking service as musical director with the reigning Prince of Anhalt-Cöthen. This change terminated for the rest of his life all official duty as an organ player, and for six years withdrew all obligation to compose music for the church. The religion of the court of Anhalt-Cöthen was not Lutheran but '*Reformirt*,' and admitted in its services no music beyond plain psalmody; while the court chapel organ was only adequate for a correspondingly elementary accompaniment. Bach's sole duty at Cöthen lay in chamber music, in which the Prince himself was an active and

efficient participator both instrumentally and vocally. He was 24 years old at the time of Bach's appointment, and his portrait is described by Spitta as showing an open face, a high forehead with abundant hair unconventionally flowing around it, and an expression combining the most winning youthful grace with an unmistakably artistic turn. That the Prince's feeling towards his master of music must have been a very friendly one may be inferred from his having stood godfather to a child born to Bach in the year succeeding that of his appointment. With respect, however, to the details of Bach's life at Cöthen we have to lament an all but complete absence of information. Its extreme quietude was occasionally broken by absences, sometimes on tours of his own, sometimes in attendance on his Prince, and these enable us to catch occasional, and certainly interesting, glimpses of him. Thus in 1717 we find him trying to meet Handel, who had been in Germany to engage artists for his London Italian opera, and was, before returning to England, spending a few days with his relatives at Halle. Bach reached Halle on the very day on which Handel had already quitted it, and these two great men, born in the same year and with so much in common in their genius and in their careers, neither then, nor at any other time, came into each other's presence.

In 1720 Bach accompanied his Prince to Karlsbad. When on their return he entered his house full of joy at the anticipated welcome awaiting him, he was met by the terrible news—not a premonitory word of which had reached him on the journey—that his wife was dead and buried. He bore the blow with courage, and drew from the steady pursuit of his art such solace as it afforded, but doubtless a far deeper consolation from his rock-bedded religious convictions.

The same year, 1720, saw Bach once more in the company of the old organist, Reinken of Hamburg, who at the age of no less than 97 years was, to the astonishment of everybody, still doing duty at the organ of the Katharinenkirche. At their previous meeting Bach had been but a youngster, now he was the greatest organ player of his time. Before an audience including the authorities and leading inhabitants of the town he played for a couple of hours with the greatest effect, finishing with a half-hour long improvisation on the choral 'By the waters of Babylon,' which, out of compliment to Reinken, he treated in the style of the Northern school of organ-composers rather than in his own. The old organist, who had listened throughout very attentively, then came up to him and said: "I thought that this art was dead, but I see that it still lives in you." He then invited

Bach to his house, and treated him with the greatest consideration. No higher tribute than this is imaginable, especially as it came from a man who was so inordinately vain as to have described himself on the title-page of a published book as "*Director organi celeberrimus.*"

While Bach was in Hamburg on this occasion a vacancy in the post of organist to the Jacobikirche seems to have fired him with the desire to resume his old seat on the organ-stool, especially, as here, at a first-rate instrument in a great church. He became a candidate, but the post was given to a man named Heitmann whose principal merit appears to have been that, a fortnight after his election, he paid to the church fund of St. Jacobi "the promised four thousand marks (£200)." The electing body had a month before passed a resolution that, though the sale of an organist's post was for various reasons objectionable, "yet, if, after the election had taken place, the successful candidate chose freely to make an offering in recognition of his appointment, it might be accepted for the benefit of the church." The principal Pastor of St. Jacobi, who was a man of high attainments and character, was so disgusted at this unblushing proceeding, which he had not been able to prevent, that, when Heitmann was elected, he refused to have any hand in formally conferring the appoint-

ment and left the meeting in towering indignation. A short time afterwards, having to preach about the angelic song at the birth of Christ, the excellent Pastor, who well knew what he had lost in Bach as well as what he had got in Heitmann, took occasion to remark that in his belief even though one of the Bethlehem angels who played *divinely* were to come from heaven and want to be organist at St. Jacobi, but had *no money*, he might as well at once fly away again.

In 1721 Bach married a second time. The bride, Fräulein Anna Magdalena Wülken, aged twenty-one, was fifteen years younger than the bridegroom. She was a trained musician holding the post of *Kammersängerinn*, court-singer, to Bach's Prince, and had an excellent soprano voice. The union was evidently a most happy one. Anna Magdalena was extremely active in helping her husband in his musical work and 'copied' unwearyingly for him in a beautifully clear open hand, specimens of which are, according to Spitta's belief, to be also seen on the covers of the autograph scores of many of Bach's church cantatas, one of which is in the Fitzwilliam Museum. She bore Bach no less than thirteen children, but it is remarkable that none of them showed any conspicuous musical gifts. The sons who creditably sustained their father's reputation were without

exception by the first wife, Maria Barbara, who, it will be remembered, was herself a member of the Bach clan and doubtless inherited a share of its potentialities.

A week after Bach's second marriage his Prince took to himself a wife in the person of a thoroughly unmusical Princess who presently brought about an appreciable cooling down in her husband's devotion for music and, presumably, also in his liking for Bach's services and society. Our composer seems thereupon to have become aware of what his personal predilection for the Prince can have alone prevented his recognizing before, that his innate gifts and laboriously cultivated capacities were not to be exclusively devoted to the satisfaction of a single Princely amateur. He gave effect to this feeling by accepting, in 1723, the post of *Cantor* at the Thomasschule at Leipzig which he held continuously for twenty-seven years until his death in 1750. It will be well, before we enter on this final stage of his career, in which his matured powers as a composer of sacred music shone forth in their meridian splendour, to take a rapid glance back at the process through which their development took place.

Descended from four generations of musical ancestors, Bach, having for father an accomplished violin player, must have received his first

musical impressions from the sounds of the most perfect of instruments, while school and church would early familiarize him with the beautiful and sturdy Lutheran *chorals* in which his soul delighted to the end of his days, and even with some motet and cantata music of a more ornate character. Under his brother at Ohrdruf he must have thoroughly imbibed the traditions of the organ-loft and of the church orchestra, while his beautiful boy's voice doubtless marked him out as a soprano soloist in the church cantatas. Thus his instrumental and vocal training would go on hand-in-hand. At Lüneburg we have to think of him bereft of his singing voice, but energetically at work as accompanist at organ or cembalo, or taking a violin part in the orchestra. That he also discharged at Lüneburg the responsible duties of Chorprefect, and occasionally conducted in the absence of the Cantor, is highly probable. His few months' first engagement at Weimar was a practical introduction to secular orchestral music, His appointments at Arnstadt and Mühlhausen were fruitful seed-plots for the development of his supreme powers as an organ virtuoso, and for laying the foundations of his style as composer for that instrument and of sacred vocal music, in all which departments he did monumental work during his Weimar years, besides adding to these activities

secular orchestral composition. Practice, during his time at Cöthen, in writing chamber music, including the production of the celebrated '48 Preludes and Fugues' which have since been the daily bread of the greatest pianists, rounded off a practical acquaintance with every department of music except opera, which Bach never seriously touched, though the 'Coffee Cantata' suffices to show that, had he touched it, he would not have failed to adorn it. This unique equipment he was now to place, during the stage of his complete maturity, at the service of sacred music in the Lutheran church.

The appointment which, in 1723, took Bach to Leipzig was that of *Cantor an der Thomasschule*, choir-master at St. Thomas' school. As a preliminary to his formal induction came a theological examination to ascertain whether his religious opinions were those of orthodox Lutheranism. His 'viva voce' led to the following *testamur*:

"Dominus Jo.* Sebastian Bach has replied to questions proposed by me in such a manner that I am of opinion that he may be admitted to the office of choir-master in St. Thomas' school.

D. JO. SCHMIDIUS."

Bach had next to subscribe the *Concordienformel*,

* Abbreviation of 'Johannes.'

a sort of Lutheran 39 articles, and take an oath—presumably of fidelity to his duties. He was then formally admitted to his office by two representatives of the Town Council, which was practically the Governing Body of the entire school, but, as we shall see, found the governing of Bach a somewhat tough job. Before the Reformation the Convent of St. Thomas at Leipzig possessed a boarding school for choir-boys and acolytes. When the convent was secularized this school was retained in order to provide choristers for the Lutheran service. In Bach's time four churches, the Thomaskirche, the Nicholaikirche and two other smaller ones had to be thus served. It must not, however, be supposed that the Thomasschule was limited to the education of choir-boys. On the contrary it was a large day-school with a small number, in Bach's time fifty-four,* of boarders who formed a

* These fifty-four, however, were by no means all capable of making themselves musically useful. In a report to the Leipzig Town Council in 1730 Bach enumerates *seventeen* only as fit to take part in the performance of church cantatas, and *twenty* as in need of further training to enable them to do so; the remaining *seventeen* he describes as "no musicians at all." Whether these unmusical boys had been admitted on the musical foundation by some kind of jobbery does not appear. I am reminded, however, of an abuse instances of which occurred in Trinity College during the earlier part of the seventeenth century, when the emoluments of a chorister's place were given to an undergraduate, or even to a bachelor-of-arts, from whom no musical services of any kind were required, and who

body distinct from the rest, were lodged in the school building, and were given free quarters, board and instruction, and certain perquisites in cash in return for their musical services. They received their general education with the day-boys while their special training, and rehearsing in sacred music, and their direction when publicly performing compositions of any difficulty appertained to the office of the Cantor, to which Bach now succeeded. The Cantor was officially included among the under-masters of the school, and bound not only to give musical instruction in the higher classes but also to take some share of the teaching in other school subjects. It need hardly, however, surprise us to find that Bach, after a very short-lived attempt to drum fragments of his half-forgotten Latin into youngsters in a low form, was heartily glad to pay a colleague for relieving him of this intolerable burden.

The principal musical feature in the services of the Thomaskirche and Nicholaikirche consisted in

was appropriately described as a "drye quirister." The poet Cowley received the emoluments of a chorister's place on these easy terms from March 30, 1636 until June 14, 1637, when he was elected scholar of the College. I derive this information from a Paper on "The Organ in Trinity College Chapel" by Gerard F. Cobb, originally published in the 'Trident,' (a now defunct Trinity journal), of June and December 1890, which was reprinted by the author for private circulation in 1891.

the performance of a 'church cantata.' This was a composition usually written for a chorus and one or more solo voices accompanied by orchestra and organ. The structure and length of the work, and the number and character of the accompanying instruments, varied with the nature of the subject to be musically illustrated. The great festivals of the ecclesiastical year naturally called forth the most elaborate compositions and set in action the most numerous manned orchestras. The text was sometimes taken from the Old or New Testament, sometimes it was a versified paraphrase or amplification of a scriptural passage; sometimes it was an independent poem. Bach's church cantatas generally open with a four-part chorus: this is usually followed by two or more vocal solos and in most cases the work ends with a choral simply harmonized. Very frequently the melody of a well-known choral forms the leading subject of parts of the cantata, especially of its opening chorus, and is treated with the master's unapproachable and inexhaustible contrapuntal skill. The text of these cantatas is but too often intolerably prosaic and sometimes in very questionable taste. For instance, in one wedding cantata the Solo Bass is engaged during many bars in addressing to the bride and bridegroom over and over again the remarkable words, "Oh you agreeable pair!" In

order to form some idea of how these works were performed we must bear in mind the executive means which Leipzig placed at Bach's disposal.

The organs in the two principal churches were *respectable* instruments and nothing more. The Tenor and Bass parts in the choir had to be supplied by the elder lads on the musical foundation, assisted by a few amateurs among the students of Leipzig University. It is probable that the 'chorus' never exceeded sixteen voices i.e. four to a part, and ordinarily numbered three, or even only two, to a part. The orchestral players maintained for the service of the church were only eight in number, and their musical qualifications were, with an exception or two, such that Bach informed the Town Council that "modesty forbade his giving a true description of them." The number had to be raised to the needful eighteen or twenty by recourse to the St. Thomas' boys and to volunteer university students. There was at each church a competent organist who had to fill in the harmonies from the 'figured bass'; but even with this support the accompaniments of an orchestra such as poor Bach was afflicted with must have sounded rough and technically unsatisfying. For all that, the general effect was, we may be sure, extremely impressive. Bach is known to have possessed in an eminent degree the special capacities requisite

for a good conductor,* and had in his hands the whole training of the choir and rehearsing of the orchestra. His church cantatas are works for the due rendering of which a knowledge of the composer's intention is far more important than mere faultless *technique*. This knowledge *we* can only acquire to an imperfect extent by precarious conjecture, as neither adequate execution-marks nor trustworthy tradition remain to give us any certainty. The original performers received full instruction on every essential point from the mouth, or from the conducting-stick, of the composer. Their presentation of these works must therefore have necessarily possessed a musical interest peculiar to the situation and unreproducible by us.

Important as was the field which our composer's new post opened to him, there was much in the conditions appertaining to it which must have been very unpalatable to a man of his temper and antecedents. To become a music-master in a town grammar-school controlled by municipal councillors, after having been Kapellmeister to a reigning sovereign, was in itself a palpable step downwards on the ladder of professional rank. That Bach felt this appears from the fact that, when officially describing himself, he continued to use the style of

* See below, pp. 49 and 50.

“Music-Director to the Prince of Cöthen.” But, independently of such considerations, the actual duties of his post at the Thomasschule involved much which a genius of the first rank can only have gone through with constant gnashing of teeth, especially the systematic grinding of raw boys in the *a b c* of musical grammar. Every fourth week the Cantor had to take his turn with other under-masters at ordinary school supervision, which involved living entirely with the boys, including the detail of getting up at six o’clock in winter and at five in summer. The school choir beside singing at the regular services of four churches, and in procession about the streets, sometimes in the most inclement weather—with what results to their voices can easily be imagined—had also to take part in frequent occasional liturgical functions. The well-to-do Leipzig burghers seem to have been as desirous as correspondingly opulent people among ourselves to be married “with full choral service,” and more anxious than we are to be buried with like accompaniments. The elaborateness of the music provided on these occasions varied with the wealth and liberality of the persons concerned. At weddings the choir sometimes assisted at the banquet as well at the church function; not without results detrimental to their sobriety and destructive of school discipline. At funerals they

sang chorals through the streets at the head of the procession and sometimes more elaborate music. The Cantor was expected to take part in both these classes of function, and his salary was partly made up of a share of the fees charged for these ministrations. Bach, not unnaturally, soon began to show a disposition to devolve his part in them on his Chorprefect: the Town Council showed, equally naturally from their point of view, a disposition to insist on his doing it in person. The friction thus set up lasted, in a more or less acute form, to the end of Bach's life. Thus at a sitting of the Town Council in 1730, after a string of irregularities had been advanced against the Cantor, it was resolved to punish him by cutting down his salary, and a councillor who inherited the name, but apparently not the patience, of 'Job,' exclaimed, when giving his vote in favour of the resolution, that he did so "because the Cantor is incorrigible."

In 1727 we find our composer in conflict with one of the clergymen of the Nicolaikirche on the question whether it appertained to the Cantor or to the preacher to choose what chorals were to be sung. With his colleagues at the Thomasschule, however, Bach seems to have long remained on terms of unbroken friendliness, but in 1736 a first-class tempest broke out between him and the

head-master which lasted for two full years and permanently embittered his relations with the school. His opponent was J. A. Ernesti, a distinguished classical scholar who afterwards attained an European reputation as a critical editor and commentator, but who appears to have been qualified for a dispute with Bach by the possession of a domineering temper and by a total lack of appreciation for music. He was appointed to the school in 1732 at the very early age of twenty-five, Bach being at that time forty-seven, and for a few years they must have been on very friendly terms, as in 1733, and again in 1735, Ernesti stood godfather to children of Bach's interminable family. The final rupture occurred in 1736 in the following way. The Chorprefect, a lad of excellent character who was on the point of quitting school for the University, had been ordered by Bach to maintain strict discipline among the young boys under his charge, and, in case any disorder occurred during church services when Bach was absent, to check it by appropriate punishment. The Chorprefect, finding that he could not control the boys' impertinences by mere verbal admonition, took the occasion of a wedding ceremony at which their misconduct went beyond all bounds to chastise some of the worst offenders. They attempted resistance, and so brought down upon themselves a more severe thrashing than had been intended.

Complaint being made to the head-master, he flew into a violent rage and, disregarding the Chorprefect's past record of good conduct, ordered him to be flogged before the whole school. Bach's attempts to beg the lad off and take the responsibility on himself proved fruitless, and at last, in order to escape the disgrace attaching to so humiliating a punishment, the Chorprefect quitted the school without leave. Ernesti meanly confiscated the small moneys standing to his credit, but an appeal to the Town Council compelled the restitution of these.

A battle royal ensued in reference to the filling up of the vacancy thus produced. Ernesti gave the post to a lad named Krause, who was of such moderate musical capacity that he presently proved incapable of indicating with the conducting-stick the difference between three-in-a-bar and four-in-a-bar. Bach, enraged at this state of things, took on himself to dismiss Krause and appoint in his room a musically competent lad named Küttler. Ernesti, who disputed Bach's right to act in this manner, ordered him to reinstate Krause. Bach seems to have disregarded this order, and at last Ernesti took the step, of which he had given Bach previous notice, of dismissing Küttler and replacing Krause. This occurred on a Saturday, during a temporary absence of Bach from which he did not return to

Leipzig until the next morning. Having learned what had happened while he was away, Bach at once went in search of the deposed prefect Küttler, took him to the Thomaskirche where the service had already begun, drove Ernesti's prefect, who was conducting, from the choir seats, and set Küttler to conduct in his stead. Before the afternoon service Ernesti forbade the members of the choir, on pain of the severest punishments, to obey Bach's directions in the matter of the prefect. When Bach arrived and found Krause again attempting to conduct, he once more drove him away, but the head-master's threats had produced so intimidating an effect that neither Küttler nor any other member of the choir could be induced to conduct the motet, which Bach would have been obliged to direct in person had not a university student and pupil of Bach's, who happened to be present, consented at his master's request to do it. At the evening school supper Bach ordered Küttler to leave the room because he had obeyed the head-master rather than him. The next step was an appeal to the Town Council, to whom each disputant wrote a pile of criminatory, recriminatory and re-recriminatory epistles. The ecclesiastical authority, too, was entreated to take cognisance of the dispute, which raged for nearly two years. How it ended we are not precisely told. As far

as the merits of it are concerned Bach seems to have been substantially right, but technically and constitutionally quite wrong. The effects of the conflict on the two disputants were that Bach "began to hate the non-musical pupils of the school," while Ernesti, if he came on a boy practising on a musical instrument, would ask "*Wollt ihr auch ein Bierfiedler werden?*"—"Do you, too, want to become a pot-house fiddler?" The bulk of the under-masters sided with Ernesti, and Bach, finding himself isolated and ill-esteemed by his colleagues, openly neglected duties which he had originally accepted only with reluctance, and, withdrawing his interests from the school, centred them more and more in free musical activity in connexion with the Leipzig University Musical Society, of which he was the conductor. A trace of this transference of activity is afforded us in a speech made long afterwards by a town-councillor who, when informing his colleagues of Bach's death, first described him as "the Cantor at the Thomasschule," and then added significantly "or rather the orchestral conductor, Bach."

I have mentioned these janglings only for the insight they afford us into the grim, combative side of Bach's character. It is not to be supposed that they seriously interfered with the main current of his musical life. His fame, nourished by the con-

stant production of fresh beauties in works for the church, went on steadily growing. His home life was perfectly happy, and, with his musically accomplished wife, his eminently talented sons, a daughter with a good voice and a whole tribe of able pupils, he could, as he himself remarked in a letter to a friend, get up at any time a complete home concert vocal and instrumental. That he often did so may be inferred from the number of musical instruments which his house contained at his death—5 pianofortes, 1 spinet, 3 lutes, 3 violins, 3 violas, 1 viol da gamba, 2 violoncellos and 1 bass—total 19 instruments. Some years before his death his productive work seems practically to have ceased. The completion of the B Minor Mass and of the St. Matthew Passionmusic in its revised form may well have made him feel that his course as a church composer was run out, his warfare accomplished. In the winter of 1749–50 he submitted to repeated operations at the hands of an English oculist, which ended in his becoming totally blind. A sudden gleam of returning sight on the 18th of the ensuing July was only the precursor of the end; for a few hours later he was paralysed, and, after lingering for ten days longer, died on the 28th of July 1750 at the age of 65—no long life for so prodigious an amount of attainment. On his deathbed his attachment to the German choral showed itself once more. He dictated to

Altnikol, his son-in-law and former pupil, an organ treatment of a choral which he desired should be headed "I now approach before thy throne." The last honours were not unworthily paid, but at the Town Council a remark was heard that what was wanted for the Thomasschule was a choir-master and not a *chef d'orchestre*. The sons by the first wife laid hands with such unbecoming precipitancy on their father's remaining manuscript compositions that they could not be included in the legal schedule of his effects. Bach's widow, Anna Magdalena, fell into poverty and ended her life as a recipient of charity.

Over long as this lecture already is, I do not wish to end it without having set before you a few of the all too scanty personal traits of this great man and artist which his contemporaries have been good enough to record for our instruction. We may associate with his memory a sturdy presence, a massive well-rounded head surmounted, like that of Handel, by the full wig of the period, and a face below it, not grim or unfriendly, but still such as to repel the taker of unauthorised liberties. Most fortunately for us, it occurred to Gesner, who preceded the objectionable Ernesti in the head-mastership of the Thomasschule, to insert in a note to his edition of Marcus Fabius Quintilian's "*Institutiones Oratoriae*," a very picturesque account

of Bach as executant and conductor. Quintilian in order to illustrate man's capacity for doing several different things at the same time, had mentioned (I. 12. 3.) the cithara-player who pronounced words, sang notes, played an accompaniment on his instrument and beat the time with his foot. Gesner's note on this passage runs as follows: "All these feats, O Fabius, thou wouldest say were of very little account, if it were given thee to recross the Styx and see Bach—to mention him specially because he was, not so long ago, my colleague at the Thomasschule at Leipzig—working with both hands and all his fingers either at our harpsichord, which embraces many citharas in one, or at that instrument of instruments the organ, whose innumerable pipes are fed by bellows, and with hands going one way and hurrying feet the other, draws forth whole troops, so to speak, of the most diverse yet mutually agreeing sounds: him, I say, could'st thou see doing what several cithara-players and six hundred pipers would not effect and, besides, keeping all in order about him, and of thirty or forty musicians recalling one to time and accent by a nod, another by a stamp of the foot, a third by a menacing finger, giving to each performer his note, now at the top, now at the bottom, now in the middle, of his own voice, and this one man in the midst of the loudest fortissimo, and though his

individual task is the hardest of all, yet instantly perceiving if anything is wrong, and where it is wrong, and keeping all in order, and always on the alert and checking the first tendencies towards unsteadiness, with the rhythm incarnate in every limb of his body, seizing on every harmony with acute ear, and singing every part within the narrow compass of his own voice. I am, in general, a great admirer of antiquity, but I hold that my friend Bach, and any one who should be like him, contains within himself many Orpheuses and twenty Arions.”*

* “*Haec omnia, Fabi, paucissima esse dices, si videre tibi ab inferis excitato, contingeret, Bachium, ut hoc potissimum utar, quod meus non ita pridem in Thomasio Lipsiensi collega fuit: manu utraque et digitis omnibus tractantem vel polychordum nostrum, multas unum citharas complexum, vel organon illud organorum, cujus infinitae numero tibiae follibus animantur, hinc manu utraque, illinc velocissimo pedum ministerio percurrentem, solumque elicentem plura diversissimorum, sed eorundem consentientium inter se sonorum quasi agmina: hunc, inquam, si videres, dum illud agit, quod plures citharistae vestri et sexcenti tibicines non agerent, non una forte voce canentem citharoedi instar, suasque peragentem partes, sed omnibus eundem intentum et de xxx vel xxxix adeo symphoniacis, hunc nutu, alterum supplensione pedis, tertium digito minaci revocantem ad rhythmos et ictus; huic summa voce, ima alii, tertio media preeuntem tonum quo utendum sit, unumque adeo hominem, in maximo concinentium strepitu, cum difficillimis omnium partibus fungatur, tamen eundem statim animadvertere, si quid et ubi discrepet, et in ordine continere omnes, et occurrere ubique, et si quid titubetur restituere, membris omnibus rhythmicum, harmonias unum omnes arguta aure metientem, voces unum omnes, angustis unis faucibus edentem. Maximus alioquin antiquitatis fautor, multos unum Orpheas et viginti Arionas complexum Bachium meum, et si quis illi similis sit forte, arbitror.”*

Gesner in Marcum Fabium Quinctilianum I. 12. 3.

It is not surprising that when even all these efforts failed to keep things straight, Bach's somewhat irascible temper occasionally boiled over. At a rehearsal when the organist had made a, presumably very bad, blunder, he is said to have flown into a towering rage, torn his wig from his head and thrown it at the offender, shouting to him meantime in the contemptuous German third person singular—"he had better have become a cobbler!" In general, however, Bach was a kindly man, very obligingly willing to play to those who asked him to do it, and greatly liked by his pupils, whom he treated with entire conscientiousness, doing his best for each, whether endowed with much or with little talent, never complaining of shortcomings which were not the pupil's fault, and only angered by carelessness and indolence. He was wholly free from professional vanity and personal arrogance, liked making music with other artists and playing and hearing compositions by other writers. It is pleasant to find him, in a report to the Leipzig town council, mentioning England, together with Italy, France and Poland, as countries producing music which German artists were expected to be able to play. He never spoke disparagingly of the compositions of his contemporaries, and had a distaste for flattery addressed to himself. Someone having greatly belauded his

wonderful dexterity on the organ, he replied, "There is nothing wonderful in that: you have only to hit the right notes at the right time, and the instrument plays of itself."

Bach's whole nature was immersed in music. When he was away from home on a Sunday he took pleasure in hearing the performances of other organists. If a fugue was started, and one of his musical sons happened to be with him, he would, as soon as its constituent subjects had been given out, explain what use ought in the subsequent course of the fugue to be made of them. When these anticipations were realized he was delighted, and gave his son a nudge of satisfaction. Counterpoint had indeed so entered into his soul that, as someone said of him, he "thought in fugue." Perhaps the finest trait in his musical character was that with a reference to which I will close this lecture. Whatever were the dimensions and importance of the composition on which he was engaged, he always put sterling workmanship into it. A man even of the greatest genius cannot, it is true, always command his muse, but he ought always to be able to control his tools, and this, whether the creative tide were at full or at ebb, Bach most conscientiously did. As has been truly said of his work, everything in it down to the smallest detail is done "to the glory of God."

APPENDIX.

The extant church cantatas* by Bach are *one hundred and ninety-six* in number. An attempt to become acquainted with the finest music to be found in this series of works is beset by the difficulty that between one cantata and another, and also between the separate movements of one and the same cantata, there are often differences of musical value ranging from what is in the highest degree beautiful and impressive to what I can but feel to be very dry and wearisome. Students approaching these compositions for the first time must therefore either be told where to look for their most salient beauties or left to work through a formidably extensive mass of material in search of them. For the convenience of those who prefer the former alternative I place here a list of the titles of 24 church cantatas by Bach which, either as entire works or for the sake of

* They are published in full score in the Leipzig Bach Society's edition of his complete works, and in separate vocal scores by Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel. *One hundred* selected cantatas have also been published in vocal scores by Messrs. Peters. A copy of the full-score edition is in the University Library, and another in the Pendlebury collection at the Fitzwilliam Museum. The library of the Union Society contains a set of the Peters vocal scores.

particular movements contained in them, appear to me exceptionally worthy of study.

“WACHET AUF, RUFT UNS DIE STIMME.”

“GOTTES ZEIT IST DIE ALLERBESTE ZEIT.”

“CHRISTUS, DER IST MEIN LEBEN.”

“DER HERR IST MEIN GETREUER HIRT.”

“NUN IST DAS HEIL.”

“NUN KOMM DER HEIDEN HEILAND.” (Earlier composition, A minor—G major). Opening chorus. Bass recitative. Final chorus.

“HALT IM GEDÄCHTNISS JESUM CHRIST.” Opening chorus. Tenor song. First choral.

“ACH WIE FLÜCHTIG.” Bass song. Soprano recitative. Final choral.

“BLEIB’ BEI UNS.” Opening chorus. Alto song.

“DU HIRTE ISRAEL.” Bass Song. Final choral.

“ES IST DIR GESAGT.” Opening chorus. Bass song.

“ICH HATTE VIEL BEKÜMMERNISS.” First Tenor song. Final chorus.

“O EWIGKEIT DU DONNERWORT” (Composition in D major). Alto and Bass duet. Final choral.

“WEINEN, KLAGEN, SORGEN.” (Partially reproduced in the ‘*Crucifixus*’ of the B minor Mass.) Opening chorus. Final choral.

“JESU, DER DU MEINE SEELE.” Opening chorus. Final choral.

“DAZU IST ERSCHIENEN DER SOHN GOTTES.” Opening chorus. Bass song.

- “ICH WILL DEN KREUZSTAB GERNE TRAGEN.” First and third Bass songs.
- “CHRISTEN ÄTZET DIESEN TAG.” Opening chorus.
- “O EWIGKEIT DU DONNERWORT.” (Composition in F major.) Opening chorus.
- “HERR DEINE AUGEN SEHEN NACH DEM GLAUBEN.” Bass song.
- “WER DANK OPFERT.” Tenor song.
- “LIEBSTER JESU, MEIN VERLANGEN.” Bass song.
- “ICH HABE GENUG.” Second Bass song.
- “GOTTLOB NUN GEHT DAS JAHR ZU END.” First chorus.

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